

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-7 as follows. A detailed listing of all claims is as follows.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An optical pickup apparatus comprising:

a light source ~~for emitting~~ which emits a light beam which is linearly-polarized;

a collimator lens which collimates the light beam emitted from said light source into a parallel light beam;

a phase device which changes the polarization of an inner light and the polarization of an outer light so that the inner light and the outer light are circularly polarized and the rotating direction of the inner light polarization is opposite to the rotating direction of the outer light polarization, the inner and outer lights being inner and outer radius portions of said parallel light beam, respectively;

an objective lens for converging which converges the light beam passed through said phase device so that a converge light beam is to be incident on an information recording medium;

a phase device for providing the light beam having been reflected from the information recording medium with a polarization phase difference between an inner light beam and an outer light beam so as to decrease optical interference between the 0-th order light and the diffracted light of the reflected light beam, the inner and outer light beam being inner and outer radius portions of the reflected light beam, respectively; and

a detector detecting portion which detects the respective intensities of reflected lights of the inner and the outer lights from said information recording medium to generate error

information with regard to said information recording medium ~~the inner light beam and the outer light beam to generate at least one of focusing error signal and an aberration error signal of the light beam based on the detected inner and outer light beams.~~

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ~~polarization phase difference of said phase device is set to a value in a range from $5\lambda/12$ to $7\lambda/12$~~ comprises an inner phase area and an outer phase area which possess phase characteristics such that the reflected lights of the inner and the outer lights from said information recording medium do not interfere with each other.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said phase device is a variable phase device in which the polarization of an inner light and the polarization of an outer light is varied ~~said polarization phase difference is varied.~~

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said phase device includes is a liquid crystal device having electrodes provided thereon corresponding to the inner light and the outer light of said parallel light beam, said liquid crystal device changing the polarization of the inner light and the outer light in accordance with voltages applied to said electrodes ~~in which relative polarization phase between the inner radius portion and the outer radius portion of the light beam emitted from said light source is varied in accordance with an applied voltage.~~

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising an optical device which is provided at an arbitrary position in an optical path between said light source and said objective lens, said optical device separating the light emitted from said light source and the ~~returning~~ reflected light from said information recording medium and supplying said ~~returning~~ reflected light to said ~~detecting means~~ detector.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising ~~driving means~~ a driver for positioning said objective lens ~~[[to]]~~ on a focal point on the basis of said error information detected by said ~~detecting means~~ detector.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a spherical aberration compensation device which is provided at an arbitrary position in an optical path between said light source and said objective lens and compensates a spherical aberration of the light emitted from said light source on the basis of said error information detected by said ~~detecting means~~ detector so as to suppress an influence of the spherical aberration on the light beam that is caused by a thickness error of said information recording medium.

Claim 8 (Original): An information recording and/or reproducing apparatus having an optical pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein information recording or information reproduction is performed by irradiating the light beam on said information recording medium.